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homemakers' chat
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Monday, September 1, 1941 Oct 27 no

SUBJECT: "TIPS ON SHOPPING FOR SHOES." Information from chemists and clothing scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.
Bulletin available: "Leather Shoes," Farmer's Bulletin No. 1523

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Have you ever counted up what you spend on shoes for the family year in and year out? If you have, you'll agree that no article of clothing needs more careful buying than a pair of shoes. The way you buy shoes means so much to the family budget--and so much to health, comfort, good looks, and probably good dispositions, too. Nobody needs to tell you that a careless choice of shoes may turn out to be worse than a dissappointment. A careless buy in shoes may harm your feet, your posture and your looks--and be a waste of money as well.

So here are a few tips to help you invest money wisely when you buy shoes this fall.

Tip No. One is just simple everday common sense--but a lot of people don't heed it. Tip No. One is: Never buy shoes in a hurry. Take lots of time until you find just the pair that fits comfortably, answers your need, and appeals to your taste. Better decide what kind of shoes you want before you go to the store. Decide whether you want shoes for sport, streetwear, parties or what. And consider what you'll wear those shoes with, so you won't be tempted to buy the wrong style or color. By the way, morning is often the best time to shop for shoes. Stores are less crowded early in the day, and salesmen have more time to give you. Try shoes on both feet, and walk around in them. Unless you try on shoes with the entire weight of your body on your feet, you can't be sure of a good fit. Walk around to see if the shoes slide here, or pinch or rub there. There's one advantage in buying shoes in the afternoon. If your feet swell, they're likely to be largest late in the day. So that's the time to get comfortable shoes. Whatever

time of day you shop, don't wait until the last minute before you need the shoes. Then you'll be in too much of a rush. It's a risk to walk out of the store wearing your new shoes. It's safer to carry them home to try on again before you wear them anywhere.

Tip No. Two is: Don't buy by size alone. Size is just a guide. Fit is what counts. Size hasn't an exact meaning anyway because not all manufacturers use uniform sizes. And then, your feet may require different sizes in different style shoes--one size for high-heeled party shoes, and another for flat-soled sport shoes. You can get your feet into several sizes, but only one will really fit you. That old idea about "breaking in" shoes is a mistake. No amount of "breaking in" will make a poor fit comfortable.

Tip No. Three: The most important points to consider in trying on shoes are your toes, the ball of your foot, and your heel. Be sure the shoes are the right length. Be sure your toes don't touch the end of the shoe, and there's no pressure on top. Shoes too short are not only uncomfortable; they give you an unattractive, ungraceful way of walking. Short shoes may cause corns and bunions--even permanent damage to your feet. On the other hand, shoes too long don't support your feet properly, and the shoes turn up at the toes.

As for the ball of the foot, that should lie over the widest part of the sole. Test this by raising you heel and seeing whether the bend in the sole comes directly under the big joint of the big toe.

About the heel. It should fit snugly and comfortably, and not slip up and down, or forward and back. Heels that slip make holes in hose, and blisters on feet. Another point: Make sure the shoe doesn't cut into your heel.

Now consider the top of the shoe. Sometimes shoes made with elastic around the top pinch over the instep. Very often laced shoes are easiest to fit because you can adjust them to suit your individual foot.

Many people would be wise to take tips from the U. S. Army in choosing shoes.

Army shoes for both soldiers and nurses are designed to conform with the natural shape of the foot and protect it, as well as to provide a firm foundation for the body. Army shoes are broad and round at the toe. The soles are thick enough so you can walk on rough ground or even stub your toe without hurting your feet. And the inside heel and wide part of the toe are in a straight line to keep the foot in its normal healthy position.

The heel of an Army nurse's shoe is not over an inch and an eighth high. Army nurses aren't among those women who say they can't possibly wear low heels. A sudden change from a high heel to a low one may cause discomfort at first, of course. The change needs to be gradual so the feet and body have time to adjust after years of being propped up on high heels. But heels too high, too narrow, or incorrectly pitched may cause weak ankles, an ungraceful wobbly way of walking, strained muscles, or even slips and falls.

Here's one last point about buying shoes for the family: A baby doesn't need shoes until walking time. Shoes put on before then often do harm. The first walking shoes should have flexible but firm soles of unpolished, rather rough material. Soles also need to be broad enough to make a steady platform under each foot. Very soft soles curl and make walking difficult, while stiff, boardlike soles are uncomfortable and clumsy.

Well, there are just a few tips to help you get your money's worth when you buy shoes this fall. Another day we'll discuss ways to care for those shoes so they'll keep their looks and comfort.

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